



## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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### **STATE GUIDANCE**

**To:** Nutrition Programs  
**From:** Mary Jo Marshall, B.S., Coordinator  
**Date:** December 23, 2005  
**Subject:** Reauthorization 2004: Communication with Households  
**Policy Memo SP-08-2006**

USDA would like to remind you of the requirement concerning communications with households regarding application, certification and verification procedures for free and reduced school meals. Section 104(b)(1) of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 (Act) amended the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act at 42 USC 1758(b)(8)(A) to require that: "Any communication with a household...shall be in an understandable and uniform format and, *to the maximum extent practicable, in a language that parents and legal guardians can understand.*" (emphasis added)

USDA recognizes that many local education agencies (LEA) provide their own translations or adopt our prototypes and we want to stress the importance of the portion of the law quoted above. Whenever LEAs are communicating with households applying for or participating in the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program, this communication must be as accessible to the household as possible.

USDA has provided updated materials in Spanish which are available on their website (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/FRP/frp.process.htm>). We are also in the process of determining, based on States' requests for translations, the priority for translations of the updated materials. On November 22, 2005, USDA sent a memorandum to all FNS Regional Offices asking that they contact their State administering agencies to determine those languages for which the States have the most need. Based upon this input, USDA intends to have their prototype application package translated into the languages deemed most needed. USDA established a deadline of December 7, 2005 for responses from the Regions, and is now in the process of compiling their input and prioritizing the languages. USDA plan to provide up to five translations prior to the beginning of School Year 2006-2007 and will add additional translations annually. USDA will also continue to update the English and Spanish versions as needed.

In the meantime, the translated application packages currently available on their website are still valid. They do not reflect the household application prototype that USDA has designed as a result of the 2004 Reauthorization Act, but they are nevertheless useful and acceptable as a means of establishing a child's eligibility for free or reduced price meals. USDA is exploring the possibility of making addenda to these translations that would reflect the major changes resulting from Reauthorization.

For further information call the Child Nutrition Division at 208-332-6820.